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ACTION ARA-15

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SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-07 TRSE-00 CA-01 /108 W  
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P 272023Z JUN 80  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5842  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
( ☒ Release ) ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ☒ ) In Full  
( ) Classify as \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Extend as \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Downgrade to \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Declassify on \_\_\_\_\_ Reason \_\_\_\_\_

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E.O. 12065: GDS 6/27/86 (DAVIS, VERA L.) OR-P  
TAGS: SHUM AR  
SUBJECT: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - JUNE 14-27, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4862

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: THE MAJOR EVENT WAS A "NOW YOU SEE THEM,  
NOW YOU DON'T" STORY OF ABUDCTIONS IN LIMA WHICH INVOLVED  
ARGENTINA, PERU, AND BOLIVIA. HERE IN BUENOS AIRES WE  
ARE TRYING TO TRACK THE BASES OF REPORTS OF FOUR DISAP-  
PEARANCES THAT JUST CAME TO OUR ATTENTION. THERE IS MORE  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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EVIDENCE THAT THE GOA IS TAKING STEPS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER  
OF PEN PRISONERS. MORE ON THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: SAME

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OLD PROBLEMS. THE COURTS CONTINUE TO HAND DOWN SENTENCES FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. A SUICIDE AT RAWSON PRISON.  
END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ARGENTINE DETAINED IN LIMA: THE MOST INTERESTING INCIDENT IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS CONCERNED SEVERAL ARGENTINES WHO WERE "KIDNAPPED" IN LIMA. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS OUT OF LIMA AND WIDELY PUBLISHED HERE THREE ARGENTINES (ACCOUNTS VARY FROM THREE TO FIVE)--ESTHER GUIANETTI DE MORFINA, JULIO RAMIREZ AND JULIA SANTOS DE ACEBAL (THESE NAMES MAY BE A MIXTURE OF ALIASES)--WERE PICKED UP ON JUNE 12 BY UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MEN. NEWSPAPERS SPECULATE THAT THOSE APPREHENDED WERE SUSPECTED TERRORISTS WANTED BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THEY HAD BEEN APPREHENDED BY THE PERUVIAN ARMY, WHICH IN TURN PLANNED TO DELIVER THEM TO THEIR ARGENTINE COUNTERPARTS. ON JUNE 17 IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE THREE ARGENTINES HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM PERU AT THE BOLIVIAN BORDER--ALTHOUGH OTHER PRESS ACCOUNTS AID BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES DENIED "OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE" OF THE GROUP'S HAVING ENTERED THAT COUNTRY. THE THREE HAD PURPORTEDLY BEEN ARRESTED AND ACCUSED OF ENTERING PERU WITH FALSE DOCUMENTS.

3. (U) DISAPPEARANCES REPORTED: ON JUNE 24 RELATIVES OF ANTONIO LUIS TOVO, A TRAVELING SALESMAN, REPORTED HIM MISSING. REPORTEDLY TOVO, WHO LIVES IN PEREZ (NEAR THE CITY OF ROSARIO), LEFT HIS HOME AT 7:30 AM ON JUNE 4 AND WAS INTERCEPTED BY SEVERAL ARMED MEN. TOVO WAS THEN FORCED INTO A WHITE FORD FALCON AND HAS NOT BEEN SEEN OR HEARD FROM SINCE. (FYI: WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GET ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS CASE, BUT WILL CONTINUE

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TRYING.)

4. [REDACTED] POLICE IN TUCUMAN ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR MARTA ELENA BESTANI WHO HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE JUNE 15. BESTANI, THE DAUGHTER OF THE LEBANESE HONORARY CONSUL, DISAPPEARED WHILE EN ROUTE TO A FRIEND'S HOME. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE OF UNKNOWN RELIABILITY THE ABDUCTED GIRL WAS ONCE THE FIANCEE OF A YOUNG MAN NOW ON THE "DISAPPEARED LIST" AND SAID TO HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY ACTIVE.

5. (U) WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF TWO OTHER APPARENT DISAPPEARANCES, LUIS RENATO DOLAGO FARIA AND FERNANDO ADRIAN

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LAMBERTO. FARIA, A BRAZILIAN MEDICAL STUDENT DISAPPEARED ON FEBRUARY 7, 1980. HE WAS LAST SEEN ON HIS WAY TO A GOING AWAY PARTY WHICH WAS TO TAKE PLACE ON THE AVENIDA CORDOBA. LAMBERTO, AN ARGENTINE, WAS PICKED UP IN HIS HOME ON MAY 30 IN BUENOS AIRES BY PLAINCLOTHES ARMED MEN.

6. (U) WE ARE TRYING TO VERIFY THE AUTHENTICITY OF THESE TWO REPORTS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DISAPPEARANCES.

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7. [REDACTED] POSSIBLE RELEASE OF PEN PRISONERS: ON JUNE 17 CONUSLAR OFFICERS DISCUSSED THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP, IGNACIO PICO ESTRADA. ACCORDING TO PICO ESTRADA THE FILES OF PEN PRISONERS ARE CURRENTLY BEING REVIEWED BY MILITARY OFFICIALS WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF GRANTING SOME

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FORM OF LIBERTY. THIS REVIEW SHOULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. THERE IS ALSO A PUCH ON TO CLEAR THE COURTS OF PEN CASES WHICH HAVE BEEN PENDING FOR SEVERAL YEARS. (IN REGARD TO THE OPTION PROGRAM, PICO ESTRADA INDICATED THAT IT HAD BEEN SUSPENDED, TEMPORARILY, UNTIL THE [REDACTED]  
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MILITARY CNCLUDED ITS REVIEW OF PEN CASES.) THIS INFORMATION TENDS TO SUBSTANTIATE THE ASSERTION MADE BY ANOTHER EMBASSY CONTACT (BUENOS AIRES 4929) THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE THAN 300 UNCHARGED AND/OR UNTRIED PEN CASES REMAINING AT THE END OF THE YEAR. FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR TOLD AMBASSADOR CASTRO THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HOPES TO HAVE MANY OF THE PEN PRISONERS RELEASED (OR AT LEAST TRIED) BEFORE THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BUT SURELY BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

8. (U) UPDATE ON THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM: THOUGH THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH INDICATED THAT THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED, OUR OPTION PROGRAM IS STILL ABLE TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS. THERE ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED ACTIVE CASES AND OUR REFUGEE OFFICER CONTINUES TO INTERVIEW DETAINEES. THE FOLLOWING IS AN UPDATE OF THE STATISTICS ON THE OPTION PROGRAM FROM ITS BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT:

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS: 682  
NUMBER SEEN BY REFUGEE OFFICER: 320  
NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES ISSUED: 270  
NUMBER WHO HAVE GONE TO THE U.S.: 44 (INCLUDING 2 BRAZILIANS)  
NUMBER OF ACTIVE CASES: 306

9 [REDACTED] UPDATE ON THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: IN A CONVERSATION WITH MR. CHARLES EISENHOWER, WE FOUND OUT THAT THE SITUATION CONCERNING ADHERENTS TO THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS RELIGION HAD BARELY CHANGED FOR THE BETTER OR THE WORSE. IN THE NEAR FUTURE THE WITNESSES WILL HAVE TWO CASES IN COURT, ONE WHICH DIRECTLY INVOLVES MR. EISENHOWER, AND ANOTHER WHICH DEALS WITH THE WITNESSES' BEING ALLOWED TO REGISTER AS A RECOGNIZED RELIGION IN ARGENTINA. THERE [REDACTED]  
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HAS BEEN NO POSITIVE ACTION IN REGARD TO REIMBURSING THE WITNESSES FOR BIBLES AND OTHER MATERIALS WHICH HAD BEEN CONFISCATED AND DESTROYED BY THE GOVERNMENT. EISENHOWER ALSO MENTIONED THAT WITNESSES HAD BEEN PICKED UP PERIODICALLY, BUT WERE USUALLY RELEASED AFTER 18 HOURS OR SO. AS FOR CHILDREN WHO HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL FOR NOT SALUTING THE FLAG, THEY HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL IN MOST OF THE PROVINCES, EXCLUDING BUENOS AIRES, AND HAD NOT BEEN PRESSURED TO JOIN IN ANY ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE CONTRARY TO THEIR BELIEFS. (JUNE 26 NEWSPAPERS REPORTED HOWEVER THAT A STUDENT AT THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOL IN CORDOBA HAD BEEN EXPELLED FOR REFUSING TO RAISE THE ARGENTINE FLAG.) EISENHOWER APPEARED OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE COURT CASES, BELIEVING THAT THE COURTS ARE MORE SYMPATHETIC THAN OTHER BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

10. (U) MORE SENTENCING: ELEVEN MORE SUBVERSIVES WERE GIVEN SENTENCES RANGING FROM SIX TO TEN YEARS BY A FEDERAL JUDGE IN RESISTENCIA. MOST OF THESE SENTENCES WERE A COMBINATION OF ACTUAL IMPRISONMENT AND LOSS OF RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP. THE ELEVEN HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING MEMBERS OF THE MONTONEROS.

11. (U) IN CORDOBA MARIA CRISTINA BOLLATTI DE IRURZUM WAS SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS IMPRISONMENT AND PERMANENTLY STRIPPED OF RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP. IRURZUM HAD BEEN DETAINED SINCE 1975 AND WAS CHARGED WITH ILLICIT ASSOCIATION AND EVADING ARREST.

12. (U) SUICIDE AT RAWSON: BUENOS AIRES PAPERS CARRIED THE STORY OF THE SUICIDE OF GABRIEL DE BENEDETTI. BENEDETTI, WHO WAS SERVING A TWENTY YEAR SENTENCE FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, REPORTEDLY KILLED HIMSELF BY SLASHING HIS VEINS. THERE WAS NO DATE GIVEN FOR WHEN THIS INCIDENT OCCURED. ACCORDING TO OUR FILES, BENEDETTI WAS DETAINED IN 1973. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION OF UNKNOWN

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RELIABILITY BENEDETTI'S BROTHER WAS EARLIER KILLED AT FUCUMAN WHILE BEING HELD UNDER PEN. CASTRO

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